



December 7, 2022

Honourable Bowinn Ma
Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Ma:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

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- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

British Columbia has been disproportionately impacted by climate change disasters, from unprecedented forest fire seasons, including the historic fire in Lytton, to atmospheric rivers that washed out our highway system and almost overwhelmed the pump and dyke system in Abbotsford, impacting directly the livelihoods of many farmers in the Fraser Valley.

Beyond climate change, British Columbians are also aware we are at increased seismic risk compared with other parts of the country – a large earthquake or tsunami could have devastating effects on our province if we fail to prepare and to build in a way that withstands these types of disasters.

We need to continue to learn the lessons of past emergencies, build our capacity to be resilient in the face of recent emergencies, and prepare in a way that mitigates the risk of future emergencies. Your role as the first Minister of this new Ministry will be to lead and coordinate the ongoing cross-government work needed to learn from, respond to, and prepare for emergencies using the best data and information available.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Overseeing the COVID-19 state of emergency and supporting people, businesses, and communities through the pandemic response and recovery.
- Responding to unprecedented extreme weather events, including heat, flood, fire, and drought, and working with communities to rebuild and recover.
- Initiating important work to reduce risks from disasters, including investments in the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy and the move to a year-round wildfire service.

As a new ministry with responsibility to oversee delivery of our government's work on these important files, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Support urgent coordinated government response to communities in times of emergency and review systems to ensure they are prepared for urgent response, incorporating lessons learned from previous emergencies.
- Complete work to co-develop and introduce modernized emergency management legislation that aligns with our government's commitments to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, to strengthen our ability to protect people and communities from disasters and emergencies.
- In partnership with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and in consultation with communities and Indigenous Peoples, advance B.C.'s commitments to the Sendai Framework by leading the development of a provincial hazard risk vulnerability assessment that builds on B.C.'s Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment and integrates climate and disaster risk. This will support development of a subsequent province-wide disaster and climate risk reduction plan that assesses risk priorities and systematically coordinates and implements cross-government interventions consistent with those priorities.
- Establish Indigenous Peoples as true partners and leaders in emergency management by including First Nations from the beginning and at all levels of planning, decision making, and implementation.
- Lead cross-ministry coordination for our government's work to enhance B.C.'s resilience, such as our work through the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy, the BC Flood Strategy, and other cross-government efforts, including work to build back better from recent disasters by:
 - Providing guidance to ministries delivering risk reduction and resilience initiatives regarding prioritization of efforts to help ensure that investments align with risk assessments; and
 - Improving transparency and awareness of these initiatives and their impacts by developing new tools for the public to access information on existing risks and work to improve resilience.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier